



U.S. Department of Justice
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NEWS RELEASE

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January 14, 2004

TOPEKA MAN ENTERS A GUILTY PLEA TO BEING A FELON IN POSSESSION OF A FIREARM UNDER PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

Topeka, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Lerin Jamell Peppers, 24, Topeka, Kansas**, entered a guilty plea on January 13, 2004, before U.S. District Judge Sam A. Crow to one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Peppers admitted at his plea that on April 9, 2003, he was riding in a car that was stopped on Southwest 14th Street in Topeka for a traffic violation. Peppers further admitted that he was ordered out of the vehicle by the law enforcement officer, that he struggled with the law enforcement officer and was eventually handcuffed. Peppers also admitted that law enforcement officers searched the car and found a handgun where Peppers' had been seated along with some crack cocaine. Peppers admitted that he had previously been convicted of a felony, aggravated burglary, in 2000 in Shawnee County, Kansas.

Peppers faces a maximum of ten years in federal prison, without parole. Sentencing is set for April 20, 2004, at 2:00 p.m.

Melgren commended the excellent work of the Topeka Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in this investigation. "Project Safe Neighborhoods is a national initiative to reduce gun violence that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms," Melgren said.